

E-THERAPY

Lecture 2

Establishing an online presence and online relationship

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Lecture Two Outline

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2.1 Introduction

In this lecture, we shall focus on how to establish online presence, identify the aspects of online presence. We will discuss aspects of online relationship; we will also visit several E-Therapy websites and identify the aspects of both online presence and online relationship.

2.2 Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

- a) Explain aspects of online presence and online relationship
- b) Identify aspects of online presence and online relationship on E-Therapy website.

2.3 What is online presence?

Online presence refers to all activity and content that an entity—a person or a business—has under their name on the internet. This includes accounts, assets, interactions, and any pieces of information created by or about the person or business. Online presence is the collective existence of a company or individual that can be found online via an online search.

2.4. Aspects of online presence

The following aspects can be used to build an online presence.

Website; an effective internet presence has to include website. Majority of the people look to the internet for their consumer needs. One will need to come up with the best design, to have something that is compelling, aesthetically appealing, and organized in a way that makes it easy for visitors to understand what you offer/do as a business. This often begins with getting a domain, and then the site is built on the domain. No two domains have got the same name.

Blog; is an online journal or informational website displaying information in reverse chronological order, with the latest posts appearing first, at the top. It is a platform where a writer or a group of writers share their views on an individual subject. This is a must for anyone who has something to write about. It is advisable that one chooses a niche on what to write about. For a counselling website, the blog should be about something related to mental health. The blog should be updated regularly.

Newsletter; is a report containing news of the activities of a club or organization that is sent regularly to all its members. It is used as a branding and marketing tool for the online counselling. The online guests are requested to subscribe and are free to unsubscribe whenever they feel that they do not want to continue receiving the newsletter. Often times, the newsletter will be sent by email, and hence is known as an e-zine.

Social networks; most social platforms are media-forward, including instagram, facebook, linkedIn and Twitter accounts benefit from a strong visual strategy. Facebook is the most popular of them all, globally; there are more than 2.4 billion monthly active face book users. The platform allows marketers to build a more personal relationship with their audience and grow their community. In the case of online counselling, Facebook is used for professional networking.

LinkedIn is also great for professional networking. This one is more restricted and one has to know the people they are being linked to or introduced to them. LinkedIn currently has over 500 million members and around 94% of B2B marketers use LinkedIn for their content marketing

strategy. People consider LinkedIn to be three times as trustworthy for delivering worthwhile content. It is the social network where people interact in a professional and corporate environment, so having a LinkedIn presence shows that you are a legitimate entity with professional networks.

Profile pages serve as online resumes. Likewise, LinkedIn company profiles showcase your company's story, products and services, content, as well as the types of industries and professionals your company is associated with. It also serves as a valuable lead generation channel since many decision-makers frequently use the platform.

Twitter can be used to promote your expertise or brand as an online counsellor. It is an excellent tool to build a community. Statistics show that businesses that are on Twitter generate twice the number of leads compared to those not on the platform.

Instagram; is a social network known for its visual nature, which is beneficial for marketing in specific niches. Over 200 million Instagram users visit at least one business profile a day, while 60% say they discover new products on the social platform. Instagram can be good platform that highlight a company's culture, boost brand visibility, encourage engagement, and direct traffic to a site.

Media publishing; is any service that redistributes information in any form or medium for the purpose of media redistribution. You tube is a good example of how one can let others know about their online counselling website.

2.5 Establishing a strong online presence

Establishing a strong online presence is important therefore having strategies that enhance online visibility is key. The following are strategies that may foster your online presence;

1. Build a captivating website; every business needs a website. A great website should be user-friendly, aesthetically pleasing, and well-suited to driving conversations. Using a qualified web developer will ensure that you create a platform that will attract the attention of the clients that are funneled into it.

While establishing the website have your clients in mind and let the clients know the services you offer. You have a few precious seconds to connect with your website visitors and let them know that your therapy services can help them with the issues they are facing. Base your content on your potential clients and their state of mind as they are searching for a therapist they can trust with their problem.

A website is specifically the landing or home page where a therapist explains; who you help and what you help the clients achieve. Your landing page needs to be like an elevator pitch in order to quickly let the client know if they are in the right place. It is also important to include questions to connect with your clients and let them know you can relate to the pain or challenge they find themselves in.

2. Set up a blog, if your website is your home, your blog is your living room. This is where most of your visitors will land and where potential clients get a glimpse of who you are.

3. Setting goals is important as you establish the online counseling business, have both short-term and long-term goals. Write your goals down and make sure that the goals are SMART. It will be easy to refer to the goals and measure your progress at any point.

4. Media production; provide consistent and valuable content via podcast, a YouTube channel, or via social media. Your online growth and visibility depends on you having a solid content creation plan. Create high-quality content that search engines and your target audiences will be interested in. Optimize and improve the content and what you offer.

2.6 Aspects of online relationship

The above strategies are a useful tool in building an online website. There are however aspects that one needs to put into consideration if the online relationships are to be sustained. These are;

1. Make it personal; let the person behind the counsellor be felt in these interactions. People like engaging with real persons. You may consider including personal information in complementing the professional talk. By its nature, counseling is a very personal business. Any business that requires lengthy one on one interaction should reflect that level of intimacy within the website itself. A quick click on the 'Meet Counselors' tab should allow visitors to learn even more about

each counselor on the website. Each should have their own page complete with full biography, contact information, credentials, treatment methods, and client testimonials

2. Use photos strategically; the pictures you choose and the message they deliver matters. The pictures need to match the mission statement

3. Add value; give your online clients something they do not always have or present it in a different way. Give the clients relevant information on mental health issues, personal development and wellness. Link clients to other resourceful sites such as those dealing with anger management, stress management and conflict resolution.

4. Social proof; real-life testimonials can reassure potential clients that they are in good hands. Social proof is all about presenting powerful words from real clients and sharing their unique experiences

5. Make it real; websites are inherently impersonal. It is all digital information, almost conceptual. So, design your page in a way that it will make that connection to the physical world. Adding photos of your business, maps, and directions. Potential clients need to know that this place is real, that it exists, and that real people are there and ready to help.

6. Make your client matter; the online relationship should be not be just about you. Shine the spotlight on your clients. Meet their needs. Pay particular attention to those who participate in the blog and discussion forums and make them feel important.

7. Engage and interact; if you start a blog for example, follow up with readers by commenting on their comments or contributions. Take time to respond by email to those who comment for their time and insights. Get feedback from your guests online and act on it.

8. Be consistent; consistency is key to building a strong online relationship since it sends the message that you are reliable.

9. Focus on content; there is a risk of focusing more on numbers at the expense of quality. Through consistency and value adding, you will gradually attract more people. Also be careful what you write lest you offend some guests.

9. Experiment or research; find out through web activity the traffic in your web. This may give you an insight on the flow of your followers online.

2.7 Explore E-Therapy websites

Visit the following websites and identify aspects of online presence and online relationship.

<https://www.lzcybershrink.net/2019/09/about-online-therapy.html>

<https://www.e-therapy.uk/help>

<https://arborcounselingcenter.com/>

2.8 Summary

In this lecture, you have had an opportunity to explore aspects of online presence and online relationship. You have been introduced to the best practice of establishing online presence and online relationship. Finally, we have visited various E-Therapy websites and we have identified the aspects of online presence and online relationship.

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